



Meditation on Scripture

Review

In the last session we did [spoken praise and worship](#). This was our first tool for creating an environment in our time with God where he would strengthen us with power through his Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. Remember that Ephesians 3 verse?

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith

In this session we will look at another tool we can use in our time with God. It is meditation on scripture.



What comes to mind when you think of meditation? Perhaps you think of eastern mysticism or new age religions that teach meditation. Even secular society talks about meditation for relaxation.

Are you wary of the term meditation because of this?

Does meditation have anything to do with our relationship with God? What do you think?

Does God tell us anything in his written word about meditation?

Let's continue on and see.

Meditation

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

- Psalm 1:1-2

Hāgâ (Hebrew: הָגָה), is the Hebrew word used in Psalm 1. It means to murmur and by implication to ponder. According to this, meditation is not an emptying of your mind as in some eastern religions but a filling and fixing of the mind. So what do we fill our minds with and fix them on in meditation?

Truth in our hearts before God

In his book “Prayer”, Tim Keller describes David’s meditation in the Psalms as “taking truth down into his heart before the face of God”. The truth that we have learned from scripture is already understood from Bible study at some earlier time.

So in meditation, we are not reading the Bible in search of truth. Neither are we working with a particular scripture to understand God’s truth in it. These are both great disciplines and worthwhile to practice. But they are not meditation. Meditation is working with an already understood truth at a heart level. When we meditate upon what we already understand we open up ourselves for the Holy Spirit to affect our hearts with what is in our heads.

When we meditate, we fix our mind on a truth of scripture and do not let it wander. We ponder that truth and keep it at the forefront of our mind. We make statements to ourselves that back up that truth, that clarify it and continue on for some time disciplining our mind to remain on it.

What Happens

Sometimes while we are meditating, God may speak clearly to us in any of a number of ways. He may convict us of sin, he may reveal himself in a special way, he may comfort us or lead us. If that happens, it is certainly fine to engage with him in that context. This may move us towards praise, repentance or thanksgiving. After that, we may or may not move back to meditation on that same truth.

Another thing that is sure to happen is distractions. Our minds are amazing creations of God and he has wired us up for parallel processing. These other streams of thought will vie for the forefront of our minds and will replace that on which we are meditating. This is when we exercise the discipline of bringing our mind back to the initial truth of meditation. It is not uncommon for this to happen many times.

The good news though is that as time goes on during a particular time with the Lord, the distractions usually lessen. For some people, the distracting thoughts may not come at all. For others, they may have to shoo away distractions for a few minutes before their thoughts can properly focus.



What do you think about all of this? What has been your experience in using this type of meditation in your quiet time with God?

Scripture Meditation Examples

Below is a collection of scriptures that we can use to delve into this area of meditating on scripture. After each scripture is a summary of the main truth of that scripture followed by a meditation section. The meditation section may be a single section or divided into a number of parts, each focusing on an area of the truth in the scripture. These meditation sections include

1. guidelines for ways to meditate on the scripture
2. a sample meditation

At the end of each section is a short time to actually meditate on that scripture yourself.

If you are in a group, share the reading. Each person can read a scripture and the corresponding truth summary, meditation guidelines and sample meditation.

Read the sample meditation slowly and deliberately and remember you are speaking these things before God as part of communion with him. If in a group, meditate on what the other person is saying and echo the meditation in your own heart.

Meditation 1

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Christ Jesus), and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

- Col. 1:19-22

The truth that we can understand is that all things, including ourselves, were separated and apart from God due to sin. But through Christ's death on the cross that gap between us and God has been closed and we are now close to him.

Let's ponder that truth and address it in three sections.

Apart from God

Think first about previously being apart from God due to our sin. It isn't nice to consider, but think about the statement that we were enemies of God. Let those thoughts roll over in your mind and keep your heart open to God's Spirit. Do this for at least a minute now after reading the sample meditation.



Sample Meditation: I didn't know God because of my sin. It kept me on my own and disconnected from him. The abundant life I know now in Christ was non-existent then. The love of the Father that has been revealed into my heart was not in my heart then. I can hardly remember how poor my life must have been. Was I really an enemy of God because of the control of evil on me?

The Cross

Now set your heart on the cross of Christ. His blood was shed there for you. Dwell on these thoughts for some time before the Lord. Again do this for about a minute after reading the following.



Sample Meditation: Christ's blood was shed for all the world including me on the cross. He was obedient to the Father all the way to death on the cross. Jesus has shown the greatest love possible by laying down his life for his friends. I am one

of his friends. The Father's love by sending his beloved son to die is an incomprehensible demonstration of his infinite love for us. For me.

Near to God

Think about being near to God now because of the cross. Keep thinking about this and be open to God's Spirit as you keep your mind focused on this truth. If you like, speak to your own heart, before God the implications of this truth for you yourself. What it means that you are no longer separated from God but are near to Him because of the cross. Spend some time in meditation after reading through the sample meditation.



Sample Meditation: His death on the cross has brought me close to God. Close to the one who knows me like nobody else does and close to the one who loves me like nobody else can. I am close to God who created me and everything around me. I am close to the purest, holiest and most beautiful God.



Pause for ~1-2 minutes' quiet meditation.

Meditation 2

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

- Isaiah 53:5

The truth we can see here is that we have peace and healing because Christ has taken the

punishment for our sins.

Peace from Punishment

Look at the pairs of words in the verse. He gets **punished** and it results in us having **peace**. Think about those two words together. Jesus took the punishment we deserved. From that, not only is punishment no longer coming our way, but we have this peace. Do you see the gracious love of God in this?



Sample Meditation: Even though I may not think of it much, my rebelliousness against God means punishment for me. But he took that punishment. He didn't need to, but he did it because that is who he is. What love! I really only barely grasp the extent of that love. I know that peace. That peace with God knowing he is for me and not against me. That peace of Christ that passes understanding. What a gift of abundant life this peace is.


Healed by His wounds

Another interesting pair of words is that through his **wounds** we are **healed**. Think about wounds. Wounds are not pleasant. They hurt. Physical and emotional wounds can hurt a lot. Wounds need to be healed. Think about healing. Jesus' wounds were not healed. This verse says that "we" are the ones who are healed by Jesus' wounds. Through his painful wounds, unexpectedly, we are the recipients of healing. Our wounded relationship of being separated from God is healed. We are brought back to the intended relationship of communion with God.



Sample Meditation: He was wounded and my relationship with God gets healed because of the wounding. That just doesn't make sense! God's love just doesn't make sense. Nails were driven in. There had to be unbearable pain with those

wounds. An awareness of the Father's presence and love was taken away. That pain was deep and unexpected. There is no love on earth that comes close to this. There is no one besides God who could love me like he has loved me. This love is not warranted. I have done nothing to deserve it. It is just who He is.

 Pause for ~1-2 minutes' quiet meditation.

Meditation 3

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

- Matthew 27:45-46

The truth here is that Jesus was forsaken by the Father when He was on the cross, carrying our sins. He was separated from the one with whom he had always enjoyed complete and intimate fellowship.

Forsaken for our sake

Think about what it means to be forsaken: to be left alone when in such great suffering. Consider how that must have felt for the Lord who brought all things into being in order that He might fellowship with his creation? How does it feel to be forsaken? Abandoned. Deserted. Alone. Rejected. Disowned. Focus on Jesus hanging alone on the cross, completely separated from the Father.

Jesus felt this separation so deeply that he cried out to the Father in a loud voice. He couldn't bear the anguish and despair that he felt. Ponder the weight of that separation.

Jesus endured this separation because of his great love for you. Do you see how deep His love is? Ask the Spirit to reveal to you the fullness of God's love for you.



Sample meditation: "I always thought the physical pain of crucifixion was the hardest part for Jesus, but being left alone by the Father who he was one with seems even more painful for him. The pain of the heart was greater than the pain of the body. He loved me that much."



Pause for ~1-2 minutes' quiet meditation.

Meditation 4

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood.

- Romans 3:23-25

The truth we know here is that every single one of us have sinned and therefore don't measure up to God's standard. But the truth doesn't end there. Because of Christ's blood, we are made right with God freely through his grace.

I have sinned

Think about how you have sinned. Think about how you are sinful in your nature. Consider that without Christ's work on the cross, sin prevents you from being near to God. Think of his standard which is his own glory. Without Christ it just doesn't work. Spend enough time, focusing your mind on these things, avoiding the distractions by bringing your mind back to these meditations.



Sample meditation: “I have sinned. Left to myself, sin will control me to the detriment of myself and those around me. God’s standard and requirement is perfection. Perfect love for others, perfect goodness, pure untarnished devotion to Him. I miss that mark miserably.”

Christ's blood shed for me

Now, set your mind on Christ’s blood shed for you. Remember at the last supper he said his blood is poured out for you. Consider the preciousness, the value of his blood. Think about the love of his blood that was shed so that you could be made right with God, so that your sins wouldn’t keep you apart from God.



Sample meditation: “His blood is more precious than gold or diamonds. His shed blood covers my sins and those of everyone in the world today, everyone passed away and everyone not yet born. I want to do something, but there is nothing to do but accept the free gift of grace. I didn’t deserve that gift. He didn’t deserve to die. That is his grace that I can hardly understand. Pure incomprehensible grace.”



Pause for ~1-2 minutes’ quiet meditation.

On Your Own: Developing the Practice

Take some time now to spend time alone with God doing meditation on scripture. You can use the verses we just went through. If you are in a group separate out to find your own quiet spot to be alone with God. Pick one of the scriptures and ignore the sample meditation that goes with it.

Read through the scripture and then meditate on it conscious that you are doing this before God. Make statements to yourself regarding this scripture before God. The Holy Spirit will be working in your heart as you do this. If you find you are struggling, feel free to read through the sample meditation again to get you started.

If you haven't done this before, try to take at least 15 minutes to continue in this space of meditation. It may seem like a long time at first. If you feel you have exhausted one scripture, move on to another from the list above.

If you are in a group, when time is up, you can reconvene and discuss with others how things worked out.

Tomorrow, when you have a quiet time with God, try to spend some time in meditation on scripture. Beyond that, find out what works best for you with meditation on scripture in your quiet times. You might take extended time for maybe 30-60 minutes on a Saturday morning to do only meditation on scripture. Or maybe you will work it into your quiet times each day balanced with the other tools you are learning in this series. As you meet Christ dwelling in you, may you experience more of Christ's love according to Paul's prayer of Ephesians 3.